The Detroit News, December 19, 1995

CRS report and not conclude that the EPA has badly misled the public on the health effects of environmental tobacco **smoke.**"

CRS found, among other things that "even at the greatest (exposure) levels, the measured risks are still subject to uncertainty." The "statistical evidence does not appear to support a conclusion that there are substantial health effects of passive **smoking.**" The report sharply criticizes the methods employed in the EPA analysis and goes so far as to say, "statistical evidence does not ... support a conclusion that there are substantial health effects of passive **smoking.**"

Simply put, EPA's conclusion of a link between passive **smoke** and cancer is based on nothing but wishful thinking.

Most damning, the **Congressional Research Service** researchers found that despite EPA's blatant manipulation of data, EPA still could find no statistically significant evidence of a link between secondhand **smoke** and lung cancer. Not to be thwarted, EPA simply lowered accepted standards for statistical significance and declared victory. The CRS researchers note that even this contrived victory is hollow, still showing an increased risk of lung cancer so small as to be statistically insignificant.

Believe our elders, our authority figures?

Certainly, but as grown-ups we may and must demand the proofs we were too timid to request as kids.

Nickie McWhirter's column is published on Tuesday and Saturday.

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BYLINE: By Nickie McWhirter / The Detroit News

BODY:

A generation of grandparents told children **smoking** would stunt their growth. We didn't always believe it, but the lesson that authority figures were not to be challenged stuck with many of us into our adulthoods, perhaps too long.

Some folks who grew up in the domestic climate now romanticized for its "traditional values" learned little concerning how to demand proofs, how to seek factual truth. Would government lie? You'd better believe it, kiddo.

That seems to be the tactic employed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other federal health-protecting authorities, recently echoed by Michigan's Department of Health and similar departments in many states.

The EPA doesn't claim **smoking** stunts growth. It has claimed that "environmental tobacco **smoke**" is a Class A carcinogen that causes 3,000 lung cancer deaths each year.

It's so hazardous to the innocent non-**smoker**, says OSHA, that **smoking** should be banned from all work places. Wisps of tobacco **smoke** in a work environment make people sick, increase insurance costs and may offend business clients, says a recent radio commercial sponsored by Michigan's Department of Health.

The EPA's conclusions, upon which all else are based, were not made on any original scientific research. They were gleaned and interpreted from 30 epidemiological studies all of which looked for some connection between lung cancer and secondhand **smoke**.

According to a Cato Institute publication, "Regulation," EPA was hard-pressed to find that link. But, press on regardless! One of EPA's own hand-picked and well-paid evaluators of this evidence had to be instructed to rewrite his chapter of the report to bolster EPA's predetermined conclusions that second-hand **smoke** causes cancer. So the data was made to fit the conclusion, instead of the other way around. Some science.

For the past two years the **Congressional Research Service** (CRS), an independent research arm of the U.S. Congress, has studied the same data considered by the EPA and released a 70-page analysis. An editorial in the Nov. 29 edition of Investors Business Daily states, in part, "It's hard to read the

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